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XI.—*Notes on a Journey from Erz-Rúm, by Músh, Diyár-Bekr, and Bîreh-jik, to Aleppo, in June, 1838.* By Viscount POLLINGTON.

LEAVING ERZ-RÚM on the 5th June, 1838, I slept that night at Hasan Kāl'eh, 6 post hours distant to the E. on the high road to Persia, where I engaged horses for Khinís, 18 hours to the S. I had been informed by Mr. Brant, Her Majesty's Consul at Erz-Rúm, that, although there were no post-stations on the road from hence by Músh to Diyár-Bekr, I should find no difficulty in procuring horses from the villagers; which information, as well as all other from the same source, I found perfectly correct.

6th.—On quitting Hasan Kāl'eh this morning, instead of following the road to Persia, we crossed the river, and turned off to the S.: after riding 2 hours in this direction we arrived at the little village of Ketiven, where we forded the small river Ketiven Chái, and began to ascend, which we continued to do rather more than 2 hours. Here we had a magnificent view of the plain of Erz-Rúm: the higher part of our road was still covered with snow. In rather less than two hours more we arrived at the village of Kōi-lí, which is built just above the level of the inundations of the Aras, here called Bîn-Göl-Sú, at a distance of 12 minutes' ride to the northward of that river: this is one of those underground villages which so forcibly remind all travellers of the descriptions of Xenophon, and of which I had seen so many since entering Armenia; but, although the houses were precisely like those of most other Armenian villages, I was greatly struck by the different appearance of the inhabitants. I was told on inquiry that the original inhabitants had one and all migrated into the Russian territory at the close of the last war, and that a tribe of Kurds had taken possession of the deserted houses. Here we forded the Aras; but owing to the depth of the water we were obliged to unload our baggage-horses and place our effects upon an 'arabah, a kind of two-wheeled cart without springs, which was drawn by two buffaloes across the river, which here flows in a north-easterly direction. In less than 3 hours more we reached the village of Aghverán, which is spelt Ameran in many of our maps: it is, however, very difficult to obtain aright the names of places in this country, as the Armenian and Kurdish names generally vary from the Turkish and from each other.

7th.—Quitting Aghverán at 5h. 40m. A.M., we arrived at Khinís at 9h. 5m., having completed the distance of 18 post hours in 14h. 30m.: our horses, however, were much better than the general run of Turkish post-horses. The country through which we passed this morning is a fine rich plain of black loamy

earth: our road lay S., the mountain Chár-Ból* directly before us: at some distance to the left was a high mountain covered with snow, standing quite apart from the rest, over which it towered magnificently. This our Tátár informed us was the Seibán or Sapán Tágh, from which we must have been at a distance of 50 or 60 miles. On our way we passed some peasants sowing wheat, which they did in a very primitive manner: the sower walking before the plough cast the grain upon the ground among the high grass and weeds, and then over all came the plough, which was drawn by eight oxen: the grain was small but very white. Khinís is a small town, inhabited exclusively by Armenians: the number of its inhabitants has much decreased of late years, owing to emigration into the Russian territory. I saw here several Russian deserters, who complained bitterly of their present situation. The town stands on the bank of a river, which winds through the plain in every possible direction, but whose general course appears to be S.E.

8th.—We obtained good horses this morning to carry us to Músh: indeed I noticed the general excellence of the breed in this part of the country. After riding 8 hours in a southerly direction we came to a very steep descent to the river Chár-Buḥur, which we crossed by a small stone bridge: our course was now S.S.W.: in 5 hours more we reached Sikáwah, an Armenian village situated near a remarkable conical hill on the western bank of the Murád Chái, or Euphrates.

9th.—On leaving Sikáwah we followed the valley of the Murád for 2 hours, and then crossed it by a stone bridge of fourteen arches: the river appeared to me at a rough guess to be about the size of the Thames at Maidenhead. In less than two hours more we forded the Kará Şú, a name about as common in Turkey as Black Water is in Ireland, and returned to the W., having gone considerably to the E. to reach a ford, which was deep enough to cause us some trouble. We entered Músh 5h. 15m. after leaving Sikáwah, having been $17\frac{1}{2}$ hours in performing the distance of 15 post hours from Khinís. Our horses were very good; but I believe that our guides led us much further round yesterday than was necessary. I had sent on our Tátár before us to procure us lodgings: we met him at the gates of the city, and were taken to the house of an Armenian merchant, apparently one of the best in Músh, where I was most hospitably treated. Músh is very finely situated on and around a conical hill, at the foot of the ridge of Jebel Nimrúd, or Niphates. Its principal trade is in tobacco, which, though somewhat coarse, is in great estimation in all the surrounding country. The bázárs are large

* Chár-Buḥur?—Ed.

and well supplied. I saw in them a good many articles of Persian manufacture, and some pieces of Glasgow shawls,* which many of the middle class of inhabitants use for turbans and girdles; though for girdles the cotton of Aleppo seems generally used by the lower orders, and Persian shawls by the higher. The chief trade, as throughout the East, seems to be in the hands of the Armenians, who are to the Turks in the proportion of three to four in the town: the villages around are entirely peopled by Armenians. There are seven mosques and four churches in the town, which is the chief seat of a small Páshálik, subject to that of Erz-Rúm: this information I received from my Armenian host. The vine is much cultivated in the immediate neighbourhood: the wine made here is excellent: the Armenians are the producers, but, unless the Turks of Mûsh are greatly slandered, are by no means the only consumers.

10th.—Early this morning I received a message from the governor of the town that he meant to visit me. He arrived about half-past twelve, and remained rather more than half an hour drinking coffee and smoking: he refused to drink wine, which was pressed upon him by our host. He then accompanied me on horseback as far as the gates. He was throughout extremely civil, though more anxious than necessary to force upon me a mounted guard of twelve men to convey me to the frontiers of the Diyár-Bekr Páshálik, as a protection from the Yezídí Kurds, of whom there are many between Mûsh and Diyár-Bekr. In order to satisfy him I took four men, three of whom I dismissed at the first village with the present which, I cannot help suspecting, was the only motive for sending them. We left Mûsh about 1h. p.m. Our road lay W. along the lower ridge of the mountains, having the plain of the Murád to our right: that river was plainly visible in the distance, but nearer us were the windings of the Kárá Sú. The plain, at the extremity of which Mûsh lies, is studded with villages, all built in the underground manner of Armenia. We passed several Kurdish encampments during the day. In rather more than 4 hours we reached Kızıl Agháj (Red Tree), a large village, where I lodged at the house of the Kyayá, the best in the place, but dirty beyond description and swarming with vermin. The appearance of the villagers seemed to denote the most squalid poverty; yet, judging from the quantity of cattle, especially cows, which at sunset came pouring into the villages, they cannot be otherwise than wealthy.

11th.—The owners of the horses which brought us from Mûsh refused this morning to go any further: probably they had been frightened in the night; for, though they protested that they

* I believe the introduction of this article among them is mainly owing to the patriotic exertions of Mr. Brant.

knew the road no further, yet on being pressed they confessed their fears of the Yezidí, who, they said, were a blood-drinking race, who would never suffer us to pass through their country. After some delay the Khaváss of the Pashá of Músh contrived, by laying the neighbouring villages under contribution, to procure us fresh horses. After 4 hours' ride among the mountains we halted at a most lovely spot, where the abundance of wild flowers exceeded anything I had ever seen: the anemones and wild tulip, among the verdant grass, resembled a rich Persian carpet: large crimson peonies grew all around, and the air was perfumed with the odour of southernwood, while our guides and servants seasoned their bread with the succulent shoots of rhubarb, which grew wild in abundance. I had seen a great quantity in Músh, and was told that the finest rhubarb in Turkey was gathered in the neighbouring mountains. We now entered a pass between two high mountains, Dárkúsh Tágh to the right, Khándúsh to the left, of which the latter was the higher.

We rode on for $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours more, having passed several mountain-streams, all flowing eastward, by the side of one of which was a large Kurdish encampment. Being anxious to see something of this curious people, I rode up to them, intending to remain the rest of the day. Our approach put the whole encampment into confusion; they had never seen Franks before; yet received us with the greatest possible good will: a separate tent was forthwith put up for us, carpets were laid down, and stakes driven into the ground to fasten our horses. The women were far the most active of the party: their wild looks, and long coarse black hair flowing over their faces, gave them the appearance of Furies. Some of the younger were very handsome; but beauty is short-lived among these people: they had no reluctance to expose their charms to our curious eyes. Our Tátár, who was but ill at his ease, assured me that we were now among these God-denying Yezidí. As soon as we were seated they brought us hot cakes and fresh cheese and curds: these they did not know by the Turkish name *yúghúrt*, but by the Persian name *máz*. I found also that bread, water, milk, bore the names of *nún*, *áv*, *shúr*.* This struck me as strange, for those wandering tribes whom I had met with in Persia called all these things by their Turkish names, while here in the Turkish dominions they use the Persian, or at least very similar.

12th.—Immediately on quitting the tents of our hospitable entertainers we began to ascend: our road lay all day among the mountains, and execrably bad it was throughout. We met a

* Nún pronounced Nún. These are pure Persian words, with the exception of *áv* for *áb*. The best rhubarb, vulgarly called Turkey rhubarb, comes from the mountains north of China.—F. S.

large Kurdish tribe on the move with their flocks, dogs, &c. About noon I rested some time in their tents, and I regretted to find that the effects of civilised vice and depravity had penetrated even here, for my services as a *hakím* were called into requisition by a miserable object whose countenance was horribly disfigured by the ravages of a loathsome disease. It was vain for me to protest my inability to assist him; I was assured that the disease was a Frank one, and only required to be treated by a Frank doctor. After having been eleven hours on horseback we made a considerable turn to the left of the road to reach the village of Kherún or Khems, the former being its Armenian, the latter its Kurdish name. This village is situated at some distance from the road in a ravine among the mountains, facing the S., among a great quantity of the largest and finest walnut-trees I had ever seen. It abounds with springs of excellent water, and the number of old people whom I saw there attest the salubrity of its position.

13th.—We now began to descend. In 2 hours we forded a river called by our guides Kolb Sú, S.S.W. Our road now lay along a succession of low sandy hills, thinly covered with several kinds of dwarf oak, one of which has a leaf resembling the willow. In 2 hours more we forded the river Pokreh, S.S.E.; in $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours more reached the Kurd village of Hájj A'ná, and in another hour the Armenian village of Teltafi. On this side the mountains the houses are no longer built in the half-underground manner with sugar-loaf tops, as in Armenia, but in the ordinary Turkish way, with flat roofs. Fruit-trees grow in abundance in and near this village; among others I noticed the Kharrúb, or locust-tree (*Ceratonía Siliqua*), which only grows in warm climates.

14th.—We set off this morning at 5h. 40m., and 50 minutes after forded a river, called by our guides Semch Sárum, small but deep, E.S.E., and at 8h. another, called by them Semes rái, S.E. At noon we had ascended the last pass, and commenced the descent into the plain of the Tigris, or, as the wanderers on its banks still call it, the Hiddekel; and in another hour we were within the small town of Khazeró. Here we were in a very different climate from that beyond the mountains: the heat was great, and the bazars were filled with fruit, chiefly mulberries, both white and black: here also for the first time I noticed the Lombardy poplar, which is common in Syria.

15th.—We rode 13 hours nearly due S. through the plain to Diyár-Bekr, which stands on a tufa-rock, on the western or Mesopotamian bank of the Tigris: from a distance its appearance is striking, but on entering I saw many ruined houses and wretched mud huts within the walls, propped up with marble pillars from some ancient building. The appearance of the town

is as though it had not been repaired since its destruction by an earthquake: I did not hear, however, that such was the fact. There is one fine square in the town; and before the residence of the Páshá, who was not there, being at O'rfah with the Turkish forces, were some very large old plane-trees. The streets generally appear to be built without any design or connexion with each other: the water is very bad, and after the fine springs we had left behind us we sensibly felt the difference. A large portion of the bázárs is set apart for the sale of ice, which is brought from the neighbouring mountains, and which all classes of the inhabitants use to render the water more palatable. Another great cause of annoyance proceeds from the clouds of dust which every breath of wind stirs up: on the whole Diyár-Bekr appeared to me the most unpleasant residence I had ever seen. That extraordinary disease the "Bouton d'Aleppe"* is very prevalent, probably from the effects of the water. I saw few persons whose faces were not more or less disfigured by it. We lodged at the house of a wealthy Armenian merchant, whose hospitality we have every reason to praise; but, though our lodgings were in appearance good, the extraordinary quantity of vermin which they harboured prevented us from enjoying the two days' rest we had here.

18th.—After the usual delay in loading our horses I left Diyár-Bekr at 3 h. 20 m. P.M., and, riding S.W. for 3 hours, arrived at some Kurd tents, where I remained all night. The water here was very bad. Our horses were much worse than any we had yet had: they were large, ill-shapen animals, of a completely different race from the small active horses on which I had crossed the Niphates, and their inferiority was painfully apparent.

19th.—After riding for 9 hours I found the weather so insufferably hot, and I felt besides so unwell from the effects of the water I had been drinking for the last few days, that I gladly took shelter among some black tents, the first I had seen to-day, where, as there still remained six hours to Síverek, I stayed the rest of the day.

The inhabitants of these tents and those where I slept yesterday were much poorer and more wretched than any I had yet seen. They complained much of the exactions of Háfiz Páshá, with what justice I cannot say. He certainly deserves from me nothing but praise, as I attribute the perfect safety with which I passed through his government in a great measure to the fear of

* This disease is here much worse than at Aleppo. It extends throughout the whole course of the Tigris and Euphrates and their tributary streams.—[It is commonly known as the Vena Medinensis.—F. S.]

his name. He has hitherto been most successful in reducing the disaffected tribes within his Páshálik to obedience.

20th—22nd.—In about 5 hours I reached Severek. The road both to-day and yesterday was extremely stony: the stones are evidently lava, and cover the sandy hills, over which I have been riding, so thickly as to hinder us very much. The town is built at the foot of a detached hill, on which are the remains of a fortress now in ruins. The dust which flew into our faces on riding through the narrow streets almost blinded us. There were no horses in the town, but in the course of a few hours were collected from the neighbourhood, so as to enable us to ride on some hours in the early part of the night.

On the road between Severek and O'rfah we passed several small hillocks, apparently tumuli. We met no one on our way; all the villagers were in tents; nor did we see many of these till within a few hours of O'rfah, where the water is much better, and there are several fine springs by the road-side. O'rfah, the ancient Edessa, is still a large place. It is situated on a spot where the low sandy hills which form the northern frontier of Mesopotamia assume a bolder aspect: here they are of chalk mixed with flint. Immediately on entering, we were obliged by the guard to present ourselves before the Páshá: he received us civilly, but not very cordially. I was not the bearer of any letters to him—indeed I had not contemplated taking this route till after my arrival at Erz-Rúm—and he seemed at a loss to conceive the object which had brought me there. He talked of Colonel Chesney's late expedition on the Euphrates, and evidently supposed I had political objects in view, either connected with that expedition or with the view of comparing the Turkish army with the Egyptian, which I should see at Aleppo or Antioch. On this point he was naturally sensitive; for such is the difficulty he has in recruiting his troops, that mere children are pressed into his service. After having given us coffee and pipes, he offered us horses to pursue our journey, which, taking as a hint to be off, I thanked him for and retired.

Here I was much disappointed on finding that there yet remained 18 hours to Bíreh-jik, which (judging from the maps, which are wrong) I had not supposed to be much more than half that distance. I rode on in the cool of the evening to some tents 4 hours off. The poor woman of the tent was crying bitterly for the loss of her son, who had been that very morning taken from her to become a soldier. It seems that the conscription is going on with unusual rigour at present.

23rd.—This morning I passed by the remains of some large buildings, of which our guides could tell us nothing. In the

middle of the day, I rested as usual in some black tents, which on approaching we found already occupied with soldiers. The instant, however, of our arrival, some Turkish officers, who were in possession of the best place, insisted, with that civility which strangers always meet at their hands, on giving up their places to us. In the evening, about 7, we entered Bîreh-jik, having rode the 18 hours' march in rather less than 14.

Bîr, which is not known to the Turks by that name, but is called by them Bîreh-jik, is built on the side of a chalky hill, descending very steeply to the Euphrates. The town is quite hid till you come close upon it. The water appeared to me very good. There is a fine stream at the top of the hill which supplies the town with water. The water of the Euphrates is muddy and bad, though not so bad as that of the Tigris. On arriving we went straight up to the house of the Mutesellim, or governor, who received us most hospitably; nor would he suffer us to leave his house, but provided us an excellent supper, of which he did us the honour of partaking, after which I retired to sleep on a balcony over the Euphrates.

24th.—I had some difficulty in procuring horses to pursue my journey, but at last my dragoman succeeded in finding a muleteer of Aleppo on his return to that city; and at 3 I crossed the Euphrates in one of those boats so admirably described by Maundrell, and which have in no respect improved since his time. On reaching the other side I was struck by the peculiar appearance of the town, which, being entirely built of chalk, would not be distinguishable from the rock on which it stands did not the deep green of the cypress, and other trees which grow among the houses, relieve the eye. I here first saw the cypress since leaving Trebisonde, the climate of Armenia being much too severe for that beautiful tree.

I rode for 3 hours at a most tedious mule-pace, and slept at a village called Elifulú. The villagers were all encamped close by, not in the black tents of the wandering tribes which I had left behind me, but under white canvass. Just before entering this village I crossed a small rivulet, which must be the Touzad of Maundrell. It was here called Kherzín (the Kárzin of Rousseau's map). On inquiring whether it had any other name, I was told it was called by the Arabs Mói.* Now, as this is merely the Arabic name for water, this must have been one of those random answers which so frequently perplex Eastern travellers. I do not ever remember to have asked a question without being answered, rightly or wrongly; nor will any Oriental willingly confess his in-

* Mói is vulgar Arabic for water.—F. S.

ability to give a correct answer. The banks of the Euphrates here are steep and white, like the cliffs of Dover.

25th.—I had determined to follow Maundrell's route—that is, the route which he took from Aleppo to Bireh-jik, by Yerábolus and Bambuch. In 3 hours I arrived at Yerábolus, before the heat had commenced to be oppressive. The mound mentioned by Maundrell is there just as described by him: it is covered with stones and extensive ruins, but the figures mentioned by him exist no longer. Here the banks of the river are no longer so steep or white. I remained all day till the cool of the evening, and then rode on to the river Sájúr, the present boundary of the Sultán's dominions. I had this evening overtaken a large encampment on the move. They were migrating into the dominions of the Páshá to avoid the severity of the Turkish conscription.

“Incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdim.”

It is a singular fact that a counter emigration is at this moment going on from Syria. I understand that both Ibráhím and Háfiz Páshá hold out inducements, such as a year's immunity from taxes and service. The Sájúr has been by some supposed to be the *Xálos* of Xenophon, which Rennell believes to have been the *Kuweiik*, or river of Aleppo; but neither one nor the other can answer his description, ὄντα τὸ εὔρος πλέθρου,* if the plethrum be a measure of a hundred feet. This river (the Sájúr) is certainly not more than twenty feet wide, where we crossed it (just above the village of Sájúr). The other part of his description, πλήρη δ' ἰχθύων μεγάλων, it answers better. On asking the question whether it was full of fish, the answer was, “*Chók, chók,*” plenty, plenty—a fact afterwards apparent to my own senses.

26th.—After 3 hours' riding we reached Bambuch† by sunrise. The ruins here are more extensive than at Yerábolus. I saw many fragments of columns. The old walls are, as Maundrell says, clearly traceable, and in part standing. These are said to be the ruins of Hierapolis. I cannot help thinking that, unless there be clear evidence to the contrary, we ought—admitting, as is certain, that Hierapolis was in this neighbourhood—rather place it at Yerábolus, the two names, Hierapolis and Yerábolus, being nearly identical. It is, however, possible that the names of two ruined cities, so near each other, may have become confounded. I searched in vain for any coins among the necklaces of the children and the head-dresses of the women, who allowed me freely to examine them, but the only coins there were Turkish piastres. The villagers, who are a poor ignorant race, said that

* B. i. chap. iv. sec. x. of the Anabasis.

† Properly Manbej, a corruption of Bambycé.—F. S.

they did occasionally find old money, but having no use for it threw it away, which, if these were copper coins, they probably would do. On leaving Bambuch our guides lost their way; and I discovered by my compass that, instead of going W.S.W. to Aleppo, they were going to the northward. I had the utmost difficulty in persuading them to take the right course. I soon found that these Aleppine muleteers were of a very different character from the Turks beyond the frontier. They were insolent and quarrelsome, and utterly disregarded our Tátár, who had thus far been paramount.

I had long wondered how so faithful a traveller as Maundrell could have given so bad an account of the Turkish character: but he had only known it in Aleppo, where the honesty, truth, and fidelity, which, as far as my slight observation has extended, have ever seemed to me the characteristics of the Turkish character, are alloyed by the fraud and treachery which form so prominent a feature in that of the Arab.

27th, 28th.—We slept last night in a large encampment, which had just migrated into the Páshá's dominions; and, after wandering about the plain all the morning to find the road to Aleppo, which, with the assistance of my map and compass, we at last did—for our muleteers were quite bewildered—arrived towards evening at a wretched village called Delsús, 7 hours from Aleppo, where we remained that night.

On the following day, our mules being quite tired, we did not arrive at Aleppo till after 9 hours' ride. We met no obstruction of any kind on entering the gates. The guards allowed our baggage to pass without a question; and as we rode through the bazaars I did not see a scowl on the face of any inhabitant. We had to pass completely through the town to reach the house of Mr. Werry, the consul, who was absent at Damascus; but from his son, who was acting in his stead, I received the greatest kindness and hospitality.







ASIA MINOR & ARMENIA,
to illustrate routes of
MR AINSWORTH, MR BRANT,
MR SUTER, &
LORD POLLINGTON.
1840.

The eastern portion of the Map, from observations by
M.A.G. Glascott, R.N.

- Red
- Blue
- Green
- Orange





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